1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

161 177 164 842 [273]

before the injurious influences made their effects felt to any great effect.

The especial influences injurious to fertility have probably been syphilis and sexual immorality, for the Todas do not appear to have fallen to any very great extent under the influence of alcohol or opium. They certainly take both, and especially after the market day at the Ootacamund bazaar, I have seen Todas obviously under the influence of drink; but I believe this to have been only an influence of minor importance on the health of the people. Syphilis, on the other hand, has undoubtedly affected them to a considerable extent. At the present time its ravages are not very obvious, though, without looking for it especially, I saw several examples of its effects. There can be little doubt, however, that it has been a potent factor in the past. In a note in a book by A. C. Burnell,[1] it is mentioned that in 1871 thirty-one Todas were treated at Ootacamund for venereal disease, and of these thirty were syphilitic. This means that in one year over 4 per cent. of the total Toda population were treated for syphilis at one place, and we may be fairly confident that all those suffering from the disease did not apply for treatment.

831 842

Another factor working towards the diminution of the population has probably been sexual immorality. I shall have to return to this subject again later, and must be content here to point out that the Toda women have a very bad reputation, though perhaps their laxity is not as great as is usually supposed. Still, there can be little doubt that the women of some villages are extremely immoral, and it is probable that this has distinctly tended to produce sterility.

162 177 842

If the diminution in the size of the Toda family is due to these adverse influences, it should be found to be greatest in those sections of the Toda community which have been most subject to these influences. The best way of throwing light on this question is to compare the fertility of the different clans of the Tartharol. Some of these, such as Nòdrs, Pan, Taradr, and Kanòdrs, either live in outlying parts of the hills or are sufficiently remote from the chief centres of the European population not to have been influenced very greatly.

[1] *Specimens of South Indian Dialects*, Mangalore, 1873.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

produced by the evil eye. Their natural politeness also makes the Todas uncomfortable when they see others eating, and in the early part of my visit I sometimes dispersed a group surrounding me by taking sandwiches out of my pocket and beginning to eat.

I did not ascertain definitely who cooks among the Todas. I had some reason to suppose that all the cooking is done by the men and that the women have nothing to do with this part of domestic economy, but I am not clear about this. It is possible that it is only food containing milk which must be cooked by the men.

The Todas are an example of a people who have no native intoxicant, but they have now taken to alcoholic drinks, though I do not believe that they indulge in these habitually. The only occasions on which I saw Todas under the influence of alcohol were when they were returning from the bazaar on market days. I was only once asked by a Toda for alcohol and then by a woman. Tobacco is now largely used and opium is certainly also used, though I do not believe that it is taken in excess. It may be employed, however, as a means of committing suicide.

FIRE-MAKING

We have already seen that the fire used for several sacred purposes must be made by friction with the fire-sticks. The method employed is a variety of the drill method shown in Figs. 65 and 37. In the former the *wursol* of Taradr is making fire in order to enable me to procure a photograph; the latter is the result of a snapshot taken when the fire was being produced during a ceremony. In the horizontal stick, which is held firmly by the foot, a hole is made for the insertion of the vertical stick, and in this a little charcoal is placed. A small groove is cut on one side to assist the falling of the spark on the tinder beneath. The vertical stick is inserted into the hole and twirled between the two hands. In the only case in which I saw fire produced by friction in a ceremony (Fig. 37), the continued efforts of the two old men were unavailing, and a third younger man was called upon,

2: Marshall G-5 (1870) 1873 Toda

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137 262 The Todas state it, as a matter of tradition amongst them, that the time was when they subsisted largely upon roots. They are even now partial, amongst others, to that which is known in India by the name of Salup Misri—orchis mascula —a terrestrial orchid which grows in great abundance on these hills. The woods also abound in edible varieties of wild-fruit —pôm—and herbs of sorts.

177 273 276 Intoxicating liquor or drug had never been utilised by these people prior to the arrival of the English. And tobacco is still a luxury.

262 862 Infants are nursed by their mothers, as a matter of general habit, for about three years: and it is not uncommon, for them to be still suckling when in the sixth year. Boiled millet or rice warmed in milk is a common article of diet for young children.

252 As a general rule, food is either eaten uncooked or boiled: but is sometimes baked or parched.

364 The Todas have no 'caste' prejudices; those Âryan fears of contamination which haunt the population of the plains, requiring that persons not of the precise same grade of life or family, should cook and eat apart: and which place obstacles to the intermarriage of those of different castes, as insuperable as if they were of foreign religions or nationalities.

264 Their two meals—which the women almost invariably cook —are eaten between the hours of 9 and 10 in the morning, and of 7 and 8 in the evening, in their little houses, but never in the dairy.

Men and women do not eat together at home, but the adult males of the family dine first, then the females. This as a matter of etiquette; which is not however so stringent as to preclude the women from eating before the men if there should be just occasion for them to do so. Children of both sexes have their meals either with the men or with the women. When one comes to consider the smallness of their houses and the primitive nature of their practices, one cannot

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

[Melgarsh Village]

complained that she was not feeling too well, and that she really did not have enough milk for twins a second time. The babies appeared quite well, the one who was presented to me as the girl seeming better and stronger than the other. Mutnarsh arrived soon after; he told me too that twins again were an impossible burden for his wife and himself, that Erzigwuf could not possibly feed them both, and ended up by asking me for some brandy for the mother, to which request I did not accede, as it is the Toda practice to distribute brandy to others on the occasion of a birth, and I suspected that that was the real motive of the demand. Besides, prohibition exists in the State of Madras, and it is impossible to obtain brandy except for medical purposes, this even being tied up with considerable formalities. The complaints about the difficulty of feeding twins made me suspect at once that, in accordance with Toda practice, it was not proposed to let more than one of them live, and that preferably the girl would be left to die. However, during the next days, Erzigwuf looked much better (she went out for a walk round the house on the 20th, in the evening) and so did the children, and I began to lose my suspicions.

I enquired who was the father, and I was assured that it was Mutnarsh. Kuddhue, since the first lot of twins were born, was not allowed near Erzigwuf, she told me, as she had the dreadful impression that they might be the result of his infirmities. Munbokwutn had had only fleeting intercourse with her, and that after her return from Palani with Mutnarsh, and after she knew herself to be pregnant. The other children were not jealous of the new babies, I was told, and from personal observation I gathered that this was correct. Both Sodup and Sodam seemed to have as much a share of their mother as before, both having been weaned from her some months earlier.

On the 24th May, the birth ceremony described by Rivers (*The Todas*, p. 324) under the name of *polk potha nit utpimi* took place. Readers are referred to that author for details of the ritual, but it can roughly be said that it is one in which the recently delivered mother is escorted to a *puzharsh* or seclusion-hut where she will remain in impurity until a few days before the next full moon, (in Erzigwuf's case, she remained there for only three days, as the new moon was just about due).

The ceremony took place in accordance with the prescribed rules, and Erzigwuf was accompanied by Mutnarsh and Silidz. What was unusual, however, was that when the part in which water is drunk out of bamboo tubes was reached, Sodup who was standing with the rest of